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GREAT BRITAIN'S BATTLESHIP FORMIDABLE BLOWN UP IN ENGLISH CHANNEL

The Twentieth Great Warship of the British Navy to go Down to a Watery Grave Since the Beginning of the Present European War.—An Explosion on Board Believed to Have Taken Place.

CAUSE OF EXPLOSION NOT KNOWN

Thus Far Only Seventy-one Men Out of a Crew Seven Hundred and Fifty Are Reported to Have Found Refuge and News Is Awaited With Anxiety by All England.

London, Jan. 1.—The Formidable, one of the largest war ships belonging to the British navy, was sunk in the English channel early this morning. The Formidable carried seven hundred and fifty men, only seventy-one of whom were saved.

The Formidable bore a displacement of fifteen thousand tons, and was well

equipped, having been built in 1898. She was one of the largest of the English war ships not in the super-dreadnaught class.

The Formidable is the twentieth big war ship belonging to the British navy that has been sunk since the war began. The cause of the explosion is as yet unknown.

THE PROTEST TO GREAT BRITAIN

FEELING THERE IS THAT THE TONE OF THE NOTE IS NOT OFFENSIVE TO ENGLISH DIGNITY.

Washington, Jan. 2.—The state department is awaiting the reply of the British government to the note from this government protesting the seizure of cargoes from this country in neutral ships and consigned to non-belligerents.

Publication of the full text of the note, authorized here and in London, it is believed will prevent any misunderstanding of the attitude of the United States by the British.

The text of the note follows: "The Secretary of State to the American Ambassador to London: "Department of State, Washington, D. C., December 26, 1914:

"The present condition of American foreign trade resulting from the frequent seizures and detention of American cargoes destined to neutral European ports has become so serious as to warrant a candid statement of the view of this government in order that the British government may be informed as to the attitude of the United States toward the policy which has been pursued by the British authorities during the present war.

"You will, therefore, communicate the following to his majesty's principal secretary of state for foreign affairs, but in doing so you will assure him that it is done in the most friendly spirit and in the belief that frankness will better serve the continuation of cordial relations between the two nations than silence which may be construed into acquiescence in a course of conduct which this government can not but consider to be an infringement upon the rights of the American citizens.

"The government has viewed with growing concern the large number of vessels laden with American goods destined to neutral ports in Europe, which have been seized on the high seas, taken into British ports and detained, some times for weeks, by the British authorities. During the early days of the war this government assumed that the policy adopted by the British government was due to the unexpected outbreak of hostilities and the necessity for immediate action to prevent contraband from reaching the enemy. For this reason it was not proposed to act immediately, and no action was then taken, although it was manifestly very injurious to American trade with the neutral countries of Europe. This government, relying confidently upon the high regard which Great Britain has so often exhibited in the past for the rights of other nations, confidently awaited amendment of a course of action which denied to neutral countries the freedom to which they were entitled by the law of nations.

"This expectation seemed to be rendered the more assured by the statement of the foreign office early in November that the British government was satisfied with the guarantees offered by the Norwegian, Swedish and Danish governments as to non-exportation of contraband goods when consigned to named persons in the territories of those governments, and that orders had been given to the British fleets and customs authorities to restrict interference with neutral vessels carrying such cargoes so consigned to verification of ship's papers and cargoes.

"It is, therefore, a matter of deep regret that, though nearly five months have passed since the war began, the British government has not materially changed its program, and does not treat less rigorously ships and cargoes passing between neutral ports in the peaceful pursuit of lawful commerce, which belligerents should protect, rather than interrupt. The greater freedom from detention and seizure which was confidently expected to result from consigning to definite consignees, rather

than 'to order' is still awaited.

"It is needless to point out to his majesty's government, usually the champion of freedom of the seas and rights of trade, that peace, not war, is the normal relations among nations, and trade between countries which are not belligerents should not be interfered with by those who are at war unless such interference is manifestly an imperative necessity. It is with no lack of attention to the momentous struggle in which Great Britain is engaged and with no selfish desire to gain undue commercial advantage that this government is reluctantly forced to the conclusion that the policy of his majesty's government toward neutral ships and cargoes exceeds the manifest necessity of a belligerent, and constitutes restrictions upon the right of American citizens upon the high seas that are not justified by the rules of international law or required under the principle of self preservation.

"The government of the United States does not at this time intend to discuss the propriety of including certain articles in the lists of absolute and conditional contraband which have been proclaimed by his majesty. Open objection as many of these articles seem to this government, the grounds of protest is that all classes of articles, when bound for neutral ports, are held up.

"All articles seem to be contraband when shipped from the United States and consigned to neutral countries. They have been seized and held on the grounds that the countries to which they are destined have been engaged in the exportation of such articles. Warranted as such charges are, in the opinion of this government, the neutrals are perplexed by the indecision of the British government in applying their own rules to neutral cargoes. In one case a shipment of copper from this country to a specified consignee in Sweden was detained because, as was stated, Sweden had placed no embargo on copper. On the other hand, if any exports no copper, but as this government was informed, put into effect a decree that shipments to Italian consignees to order' which arrive in ports of Italy cannot be exported or trans-shipped. The only exception which Italy makes is of copper which passes through that country in transit to another country. In spite of these decrees, however, the British foreign office has thus far declined to affirm that copper shipments consigned to Italy will not be molested on the high seas. Seizures are now numerous and delays so prolonged that exporters are afraid to send their copper to Italy, steamships decline to accept it, and insurers refuse to issue policies upon it. In a word, legitimate trade is being greatly impaired through uncertainty as to the treatment which it may expect at the hands of the British authorities.

"We feel that we are abundantly justified in asking for information as to the manner in which the British government proposes to carry out the program they have adopted in order that we may decide on the steps necessary to protect our citizens engaged in foreign trade in their rights, from the serious losses to which they are liable through ignorance and hazards to which their cargoes are exposed.

"In the case of conditional contraband the policy of Great Britain appears to this government to be equally unjust, according to the established rules of conduct. In evidence of this the fact is established that a number of American cargoes seized consist of food stuffs and other articles of common use in all countries, which are admittedly relative contraband. In spite of the presumption of innocent use because destined to neutral territory, the British authorities make these seizures and detentions without, so far as we are informed, being in possession of facts which warranted a reasonable belief that the shipments had, in reality, a belligerent destination, as that term is used in international law. Mere suspicion is not evidence, and doubts should be resolved in favor of neutral commerce, not against it.

"The effect upon trade because of these articles of trade are seized is not entirely cured by reimbursement of the owners for the damages which they have suffered, after investigation has failed to establish an enemy destination. The injury is to American commerce with neutral countries, as a whole, through the hazard of the en-

BRITISH CABINET CONSIDERS UNCLE SAM'S NOTE OF PROTEST AND PONDERES ON IT

An Immediate Reply Will Not be Given Since Investigation Becomes Necessary Because of the Nature of the Demands Made by the United States Upon England and the Belligerent Nations.

ENGLISH PUBLIC SENTIMENT FRIENDLY

It Is Expected That An Amicable Settlement of the Matter Will be Speedily Brought About, and That Neutrality Will be Maintained and Encouraged.

London, Dec. 31.—The public comment in England today on the question of the protest by the United States regarding shipping continues to be friendly, and it is today generally believed that an amicable agreement will be reached at an early date.

The British cabinet met in special session yesterday for the consideration of the American government's protest against the delay to American shipping, caused by the searching of vessels by the British fleet. The meeting was occasioned by the receipt of the note registering the complaint which came the day before. No reply by the British cabinet may be expected for several days, for it was pointed out that a note that it took weeks to draft, could hardly be expected to receive deliberation and a reply immediately here. While it has come as somewhat of a shock to the people that differences had arisen between the two governments on a subject that is a difficult one, the note is calmly discussed, except by those who declare that Great Britain should disregard American wishes and follow a policy best calculated to assist the allies in the war.

British ship owners who are almost as greatly concerned over the situation as Americans, express the opinion that the matter will be amicably settled.

The director of one large company, admitting inconveniences in the search, said some of this inconvenience might be obliterated.

Much depends upon the effective effort of Denmark, Holland, Norway and Sweden to prevent re-shipment to Germany and Austria-Hungary of American cargoes. Until water tight regulations are put in force in those countries little hope, it is understood, is held out by Great Britain for relaxation in searching American cargoes.

One official pointed out that Italy had effectively checked contraband shipments to Austria-Hungary and Germany, with the result that Great Britain was not stopping ships des-

tined for Italy, unless there appeared special reason to suspect fraudulent consigning.

A guarantee by the United States as to the honesty of consignments bills and enactment of regulations for severe punishment of fraud, granting that the American government could find satisfactory means of making such a guarantee, was admitted by the official as a possible step which might cause a relaxation of search.

The Washington note holds the first place in the news and editorial columns and wherever the war is discussed. It is contended everywhere that mutual good will will bridge the difficulty and obviate further irritation.

"We have no right to feel aggrieved because of the American endeavors to mitigate the losses which the war inflicts on the merchants and manufacturers of that country," says the Westminster Gazette, which more than any other newspaper reflects the government's views. It contends that it is to the interest of neutrals as well as belligerents to shorten the war, and that therefore neutrals should submit to any reasonable restrictions which are likely to have that effect.

Stating that the right of search is conceded in the American note, the Westminster Gazette admits that the right should be exercised with all possible regard to the convenience of neutrals. It suggests it would be well for the British government to supply daily to the American ambassador a list of the ships stopped with a statement of the reasons therefor, so that questions arising in this connection might be adjusted at once. Similar information might be given to American newspaper correspondents in London. The Westminster Gazette says it feels sure that instructions will be given to avoid the detention of ships on mere suspicion, and that if such searches as can be conducted at sea fail to reveal good ground for forcible detention, such action will not be resorted to.

terprise and the repeated diversion of goods from established markets.

"It also appears that cargoes of this character have been seized by the British because of a belief that, though not originally so intended by the shippers, they will ultimately reach the territory of the enemies of Great Britain. Yet this belief is reduced to a mere fear in view of the embargoes which have been decreed by the neutral countries, to which they are destined, on the articles comprising the cargoes.

"That the consignment 'to order' of articles listed as conditional contraband and shipped to a neutral port raises a legal presumption of enemy destination appears to be directly contrary to the doctrine previously held by Great Britain and this stated by Lord Salisbury during the South African war.

"Foodstuffs, though having a hostile destination, can be considered as contraband of war only if they are for the enemy's forces; it is not sufficient that they are capable of being so used; it must be shown that this was in fact their destination at the time of their seizure.

"With this statement as to conditional contraband, the views of this government are in entire accord and upon this historic doctrine, consistently maintained by Great Britain, when a belligerent as well as a neutral, American shippers were entitled to rely.

"The government of the United States readily concedes the right of a belligerent to visit and search on the high seas the vessels of American citizens or other neutral vessels carrying American goods and to detain them when there is sufficient evidence to justify a belief that contraband articles are in their cargoes; but his majesty's government, judging by their own experience in the past, must realize that this government cannot without protest permit American ships or American cargoes to be taken into British ports and there detained for evidence of contraband or upon presumptions created by special municipal enactments which are clearly at variance with international law and practice.

"This government believes and earnestly hopes his majesty's government will come to the same belief, that a course of conduct more in conformity with the international usage, which Great Britain has strongly sanctioned for many years will, in the end, better serve the interests of belligerents, as well as those of neutrals.

"Not only is the situation a critical one to the commercial interests of the United States, but many of the great industries of the country are suffering because their products are denied long established markets in European

countries, which, though neutral, are contiguous to the nations at war. Producers and exporters, steamship and insurance companies, are pressing, and not without reason, for relief to the menace of international trade which is gradually but surely destroying their business and threatening them with financial disaster.

"The government of the United States, still relying upon the deep sense of justice of the British nation, which has so often been manifested in the intercourse between the nations during so many years of uninterrupted friendship expresses confidently the hope that his majesty's government will realize the obstacles and difficulties which their present policy has placed in the way of commerce between the United States and the neutral countries of Europe, and will instruct its officials to restrain from all unnecessary interference with the freedom of trade between nations which are suffering, though not participants, in the conflict; and will, in their treatment of neutral ships and cargoes, conform more closely to those rules governing the maritime relations between belligerents and neutrals, which have received the sanction of the civilized world and which Great Britain has, in other wars, so strongly and successfully advocated.

"In conclusion, it should be impressed on his majesty's government that the present condition of American trade with the national European countries is such that if it does not improve may arouse a feeling contrary to that which has so long existed between the American and British peoples.

"Already it is becoming more and more the subject of public criticism and complaint. There is an increasing belief, doubtless not entirely unjustified, that the present British attitude toward American trade is responsible for the depression in certain industries which depends on European markets. The attitude of the British government is called to their notice to show how widespread the result upon the industrial life of the United States and to emphasize the desire for the removal of complaint."

MURDERED WOMAN AND 3 CHILDREN; THEN SUICIDED.

Luray, Va., Jan. 4.—William Nichols murdered Mrs. Charles Burner and three children in their mountain home. Nichols' body was found this morning near by, with his head blown off, and a shot gun close by. It is believed he was angered because the woman repelled his advances. Her husband was first suspected of the crime, but it is now known he was absent at the time.